



**New County Farming
Resource Website**

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County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

Contributing to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan Environment Initiative

"Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental

**Urban Planning in the
Classroom**

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East County MSCP Plan Is Underway



*Public Agencies Meeting at the Julian
Town Hall to coordinate land-use and
conservation efforts*

The County of San Diego is continuing its MSCP planning efforts by embarking on the preparation of the East County MSCP (ECMSCP) Plan is the final of three MSCP Plans that will work together to

protect sensitive plants, animals, and their habitats in the County.

The purpose of the MSCP is to protect key sensitive plant and animal populations and habitats within the County. This plan will maintain or improve the status of threatened and endangered species and eliminate future listings of species as endangered under the under Federal and State Endangered Species Acts. The ECMSCP Plan will be the basis for conservation while accommodating continued economic growth. The ECMSCP Plan is a cooperative effort among the County, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game and many other public and private stakeholders. Authority for this process comes from the State of California Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act and Section 10(a) of the Federal Endangered Species Act that addresses Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs).

Kim Zuppiger is the Project Manager for the East County MSCP. Two outreach meetings were recently held to provide an overview of the ECMSCP, the anticipated planning process and a timeline for completing the ECMSCP Plan.

A Public Agency Open Forum was held in Julian on May 3, 2005 to coordinate planning efforts with various districts and public agencies to determine how and where conservations plans can complement one another. Representatives from 20 public agencies attended the meeting.

An Open House was held on May 25, 2005, at the County Planning Department. Staff provided a presentation and displayed maps for 56 members of the public, including other local, state and Federal agency staff as well as interested parties representing landowner, environmental and business interests. A summary of the meeting is posted on the MSCP website.

MSCP Staff will meet with Community Planning and Sponsor Groups in the Fall of 2005 to introduce the ECMSCP Plan and allow the communities to review study area maps, identify areas of interest and provide input.



Key Features of the East County MSCP Plan

The Study Area is approximately 1.5 million acres.

Approximately 75% is publicly owned including the Cleveland National Forest, the Anza Borrego State Park, Cuyamaca, Descanso, Palomar State Park, BLM lands and other special districts.

The East County Plan has the potential to cover 254 sensitive species. Some of the key driving species in the East County Plan will include the Arroyo Toad, Stephen's Kangaroo Rat, and the Laguna Mountain Skipper.

The GP 2020 (County General Plan Update) Residential Baseline Map indicates very low land use densities in the study area. Densities range from 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres to 1 dwelling unit per 160 acres.

Several Regional Trails cross the East County Study Area including: The Trans County Trail, Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), Juan Bautista De Anza Historic National Trail (Anza Trail), Coast to Crest Trail (San Dieguito River Park), The California Riding and Hiking Trail, and the San Diego River Trail.



Mount Laguna; Cleveland's horkelia



Mason Valley off the Sunrise Highway



Banner Grade Mountains

East County Explorations

MSCP Staff and student workers recently toured East County and got a sense of the diversity of plants, animals, topography, and climate within the project area.

Heading East on Interstate 8, we took the Sunrise Highway exit to our first stop — Mount Laguna. This part of the Cleveland National Forest is home to the Laguna Mountain Skipper, a federally-listed endangered butterfly that is restricted to areas where its host plant, Cleveland's horkelia, grows. One of the factors in the decline of the Laguna Mountains skipper may be the decreasing abundance of their host plant. This plant is restricted to montane meadows, which have been degraded through development, grazing, and recreational activities.

Continuing north on Sunrise Highway, we stopped to take in the scenic view of Mason Valley. The basin of the valley a desert transitional area and a rain shadow. It receives only a few inches of rain per year while the top of the mountain receives about 18 inches.

We passed Lake Cuyamaca and wound our way through Banner Grade. The Banner Grade Mountains is a striking peninsular range which was created by uplifted rock along the Elsinore Fault. This splinter fault of the San Andreas is the most extensive fault system in San Diego County which many believe is capable of causing a major earthquake. Looking across the canyon you can see the fault's surface trace, which cuts low across the canyon's north slope. You also notice how some of the ravines on the slope exhibit a dogleg, or offset, pattern due to horizontal movements.

After Banner Grade, we traveled to the Anza Borrego Desert. This is the largest desert state park in the United States with over 600,000 acres. Species including desert iguanas, mule deer, roadrunners and kit foxes. Out of the 280 Peninsular Bighorn Sheep existing in the United States, approximately 200 of them live in the Anza Borrego Desert. They can store water and can lose up to 30% of their bodyweight before needing another drink.

(Explorations continued on page 3)

*Explorations (continued from page 2)**White-lined Sphinx Moth*

Wildflowers such as Sand Verbena and Fascilla were blooming along Henderson Valley Road. We saw finger-sized White Lined Sphinx Moth caterpillars which will eventually turn into moths that are as large as hummingbirds.

We stopped at the Anza Borrego Desert State Park Visitors Center which houses many artifacts from the desert that were left from the indigenous people of the area. Natural resources from the desert are displayed including Desert Pup Fish, which naturally occur in the streams and pools in the desert.

*Flower Fields of Anza Borrego*

In Borrego Springs, we passed the Borrego Sink, a natural drainage basin which captures water draining east from the Cleveland National Forest. Our exploration continued as we left Anza Borrego and entered Imperial County. We pulled off the road in Ocotillo Wells, which resembles the Grand Canyon. The land is extraordinarily different from the other areas we visited earlier, marked with deep canyons stretching into the horizon.

We finally reached the Salton Sea, our ultimate destination. This is part of the "Pacific Flyway", a major stopover for over 350 different kinds of migratory birds. It is the largest inland surface water body in

*Borrego Springs**American Avocets at the Salton Sea*

California. Up to four million birds can be found at any one time there during the winter. We spotted two American Avocet's, pictured at left. These birds feed by swinging their upturned beaks in the water to collect tiny invertebrates near surface.

Our safari into East County led us through extremely diverse territories without going more than 130 miles east of San Diego. We saw amazing views of wildlife and untouched areas, and walked away with more pride and knowledge about the natural areas in our own backyard.



Students Design a Community to Preserve Natural Areas and Provide Housing



Juniors and Seniors draft maps which create a healthy community for both people and wildlife.

During the third week of April, MSCP staff assisted students at El Camino High School who were completing the "Urban Planning in the Classroom" exercise, an environmental curriculum created by MSCP staff to advance students' understanding of environmental issues associated with the Land Use decision-making process. Two classes of juniors and seniors worked in groups representing developers, environmentalists and various stakeholders. The groups researched the needs and locations of sensitive plants and animals, housing costs and regulations. They later convened to make consensus-based decisions to develop the land. Final maps were created that met the needs of the community and sensitive species in the area.

The nature of this exercise provides students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge and personal experience to habitat preservation. The County is applying for grants to refine, maintain and disseminate this program to schools and interested teachers across the County.

For more information about Urban Planning in the Classroom contact Jeremy Buegge at johnjeremy.buegge@sdcounty.ca.gov.

County Trails Program Receives National Award

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation received a major national award from the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) for the County Trails Program. NACPRO presents a total of only two awards each year for programs that represent the best in innovation and impact for the communities that they serve. Other park and recreation agencies across the country look to these award recipients for program ideas and innovative operational concepts. With this prestigious award, DPR expands its trail blazing efforts into the national park and recreation industry.

To view the Community Trails Master Plan, please visit <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/trails.html>. Please contact, Maryanne Vancio, Trails Program Coordinator, at (858) 694-3969 or via email at maryanne.vancio@sdcounty.ca.gov with any questions.

Preserve Models Utilized for the East County MSCP Plan

There are three different models used to help develop the MSCP preserve design. The Species Predictive Model takes the different kinds of habitats and attributes that a species needs, puts this information in a matrix and applies GIS layers to the matrices, coming up with a potential distribution of individual species. This is folded into the Habitat Evaluation Model (HEM) that has different inputs for species such as habitat patch size and edge effect. The Independent Science Advisors that were involved in the technical peer review of the North County MSCP Plan suggested that a third model, the Sites Model Reserve Selection Algorithm, also be utilized. This model will be used to determine where the preserves will be located.

Once the consultant for the East County MSCP Plan is on board, the Species Predictive Modeling and Habitat Evaluation Modeling will take place and be folded into the Sites Model concept.



JUST ONE CLICK AWAY: RESOURCES FOR COUNTY FARMERS

**Introducing the County of San Diego Farming On-line Website:
*Farming in an Urban County***

http://dplu-mscp.sdcounty.ca.gov/pub_out/farming.htm



Ever wonder who, let alone which County department to call, regarding questions on farming in San Diego County? Wonder no more. The County of San Diego has created the County of San Diego Farming On-Line website to answer your questions regarding farming within the County. The website can be accessed at the following web address: http://dplu-mscp.sdcounty.ca.gov/pub_out/farming.htm.

The website is an interdepartmental effort amongst the Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AWM), Farm and Home Advisor/University of California Cooperative Extension (FHA/UCCE), the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU), the Department of Environmental Health (DEH), and the Department of Public Works (DPW). These County departments have worked with the San Diego County Farm Bureau in developing the website. The goal of the website is to create a comprehensive space where County farming-related resources can be found. The website contains information on:

- Who to Call With Questions
- County of San Diego Land Use Programs
- Regulations
- County Forms and Applications
- Funding Opportunities and Compensatory Programs
- Various Farming Related Links

The website is just one avenue that shows how the County of San Diego is dedicated to planning and supporting farming in the County. On May 11th, 2005, the County Board of Supervisors approved and adopted a Board policy entitled Support and Encouragement of Farming in San Diego County. The purpose of the Policy is to acknowledge the Board of Supervisors commitment to supporting and encouraging farming in San Diego County through the establishment of partnerships with landowners and other stakeholders to identify, secure, and implement incentives that support the continuation of farming as a major industry in San Diego.

The website is a living resource in which items are continuously added and modified as needed. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Cheryl Monzon at cheryl.monzon@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Farming in San Diego County Facts:

- San Diego is defined as an urban county
- Farming covers a total of 265,041 acres
- Agriculture ranks 5th as a component of San Diego County's economy
- For every dollar of agricultural product value, a multiplying factor of 3.5 may be applied to estimate the full economic impact of agriculture, which calculated to nearly \$4.8 billion in 2003
- With 5,255 farms, San Diego County has the 3rd highest number of farms in the United States
- San Diego County is ranked 8th in the State of California (ranked #1 state in the nation) based on the gross value of its agricultural production
- San Diego County leads the state in nursery products, flowers and foliage, and avocado production
- In San Diego 92% of the farms are family owned and 77% of the farmers live on their land
- Farming in San Diego County plays an important role in maintaining the region's environmental quality

Statistics are from the County of San Diego Department of AWM 2003 Crop Statistics and Annual Report



East County MSCP Contact Information:

We Welcome Your Input

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EAST COUNTY MSCP PLAN KEY FEATURES AND PROJECTED TIMELINE

Key Features

1,551,600 acres

Up to 254 sensitive species

**Covers the East County
Communities of:**

Alpine (Portions)
 Boulevard
 Central Mountain
 Cuyamaca
 Descanso
 Desert/Borrego Springs
 Dulzura (Portions)
 Jacumba
 Julian
 Lake Morena/Campo
 Mountain Empire
 Palomar Mountain
 Pine Valley
 Potrero
 Ramona (Portions)
 Tecate

Projected Timeline

2005	Spring	Public Outreach and Stakeholder Input
	Summer	Hire Consultant
	Fall	Evaluating habitat and species models to identify preservation goals
2006	Winter	
	Spring	
2006	Summer	Finalizing preserve map
	Fall	Writing text of East County MSCP Plan and/or related documents
	Winter	
2007	Spring	
	Summer	Preparing environmental documentation
	Fall	



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